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words meaning "the devil," or at least some of his angels. I write with all due deference and under correction. Possibly some of your readers may kindly add to or subtract from my remarks.

Charles G. Leland.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

BOOKS.

THE GOLDEN BOUGH. A Study in Comparative Religion. By J. G. FRAZER, M. A., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. In two volumes. London and New York : Macmillan & Co. 8vo, pp. xii., 407, 409.

In this remarkable book, Mr. Frazer, in order to make an extensive exploration in the domain of primitive religion, begins by propounding a riddle. Respecting the worship of Diana in the Arician grove, — the grove of Lake Nemi, represented by Turner in a famous picture, — Latin writers tell a strange story. According to their scanty allusions, the priest of the grove was a runaway slave, who had procured his office by slaying his predecessor, and might in turn himself be slain by any successor who was able, in the first place, to break off the bough of a certain tree, affirmed to be the Golden Bough plucked by Æneas before his journey to the land of the dead ; hence the title of Turner's painting and of Mr. Frazer's book. What was the meaning of the strange rite, and what was the Golden Bough ?

Judging by the reflected illumination furnished by the analogy of primitive religions, our author concludes that this custom was an example of the common practice of putting to death the divine king or priest who typified and embodied the generative power of the earth, a custom explained by the notion that, as this personage contained within himself the life-giving soul which was the principle of fertility, so his natural death would introduce decay and decline into the vitality of nature, and he must therefore be slain, in order that his life-giving spirit, while still in its full vigor, might be appropriated by his successor. As for the branch, he supposes this to be the mistletoe, which, being evergreen, was regarded as the life of the oak.

It is evident that such a work is not to be judged by the certainty of the result thus barely stated. Where a rite is isolated and must be interpreted through analogy, it is manifest that the chances of error are innumerable. It seems scarcely proved that the position of the priest in the Arician grove may not have been what the legend of the worship at Nemi represented it to be, namely, a survival of the custom of sacrificing strangers. In the course of time, the fugitive or wanderer may have been allowed a chance for his life ; of several such visitors or captives, one may have been allowed to do battle with another, and afterwards been retained as devoted to the sanctuary. At all events, the possibilities of variation of a primitive usage are so great that one naturally doubts any single explanation.

In the present case, however, the hypothesis is not the main point of Mr. Frazer's undertaking. He proceeds in his research by a series of steps, which individually remain sound, even if the distance from one to another sometimes appear too great to surmount. His book is not only a storehouse of facts in religion and folk-lore, but exhibits those facts ingeniously gathered into sequence, and used to establish propositions, of which some are clear and indubitable, others plausible and open to controversy. It becomes clear to the reader that the study of philosophies and religions is intimately associated with folk-tale and folk-custom, that the survivals of to-day explain the dark places of past habit, and that our daily thoughts are intimately linked with those superstitions which seem rudest and crudest. At the outset, an admirable treatment of sympathetic magic exhibits the manner in which man, in the simplicity of his infancy, imagines that he can, by the exercise of his will or by stated actions, cause wind and rain, affect the light of the sun and the fertility of the seasons. The writer presents the theory of incarnate gods living in the person of the chief or king, in whom exists, and who believes himself to possess, the powers required for furnishing his tribe with their sustenance, and supplying the earth with its power of fertility. Tree-worship in modern survival and in antiquity is described, and its continuance in the European observances of the first of May. With these Mr. Frazer connects the worship of Zeus and Hera, beliefs respecting Ariadne and Diana, whose cult in the Arician grove is assumed to have that of a tree-spirit or woodland deity. The nature of taboos is explained, as systems of provisions designed to detain the soul in its bodily dwelling-place, and prevent it from the risk of capture or escape, a loss which would cause the pining or death of the person. In a chapter on "Killing the God," it is shown how from this manner of viewing life results the practice of killing the living divinity before the flight or diminution of the animating soul can endanger the prosperity of the tribe from which vital force would thus have departed. By the death and resurrection of vegetation, Mr. Frazer explains the myths of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Dionysius, and Demeter; to the rites of these personages, in his opinion, belonged human sacrifices, in which the victim represented the god, and was supposed to embody the spirit of fertility. He points out how, instead of human form, the same spirit had numerous animal incarnations, and how the flesh of the sacrifice might be distributed in order to fertilize the fields, or sacramentally eaten with a view to strengthening the vitality of the clan. Looking for the nature of the "Golden Bough," the author, by the aid of the myth of Balder, discovers it in the mistletoe. He concludes his discussion as follows: "The result of our inquiry is to make it probable that, down to the time of the Roman Empire and the beginning of our era, the primitive worship of the Aryans was maintained nearly in its original form at the sacred grove in Nemi, as in the oak woods of Gaul, of Prussia, and of Scandinavia; and that the King of the Wood lived and died as an incarnation of the supreme Aryan god, whose life was in the mistletoe or Golden Bough."

The reaction against the popular theory of the "Solar Myth" could

hardly go further. From the conception of the primitive Aryan as an innocent child who climbs the hilltop at morn in order to behold the glory of the rising orb, the dawning of which he celebrates in poetic hymns, to the Aryan priest, who regards himself as the source of the impulse which causes that orb to ascend, or as the incarnation of a divine principle of nature whose life exists especially in the mistletoe, is indeed a change.

We cannot allow this occasion to pass without a protest against our author's conception of primitive religion. He mentions (i. 348) four marks of such religion, as follows: (1) No special class of persons set apart for the performance of the rites; no priests. (2) No special places; no temples. (3) Spirits, not gods; names generic, not proper; no marked individuality; no accepted traditions. (4) Rites magical rather than propitiatory.

We ask, where does primitive religion exist, if this alone be primitive? What people can with certainty be affirmed to have, or any time to have had, no special places of worship, no priests, no named deities, and no oral traditions respecting these? So far as respects American races, every number of this Journal has contained records which contradict the definition of Mr. Frazer. The idea, especially, that the primitive Aryan, before the separation of the different stocks, was limited as our author implies, appears to us counter to all reasonable probability. No doubt, inferences as to the remote prehistoric state of mind of tribes concerning which no records exist, may, with more or less plausibility, be formed; but these inferences, after all, are hypotheses about on a level with those relating to the origin of language. So far as observation goes, the first glimpse we have of primitive religions of European, Asiatic, and American races exhibits a highly complicated sum of conceptions, accompanied with a literary development (if it be not a paradox to use the term as applied to literature without letters) of no mean order.

So, again, when we read (ii. 90) that "the gods whom hunters and shepherds adore and kill are animals pure and simple," we feel constrained to ask, do these hunters and shepherds possess the conception of animals pure and simple? The animal of the savage is anything but a pure and simple being: he is, to all intents and purposes, human; he possesses the whole complex of human reason; he has a separate human form, which he may at any moment assume, in and under which he may become the hero of adventures. Is this a pure and simple conception? As primitive religion, at the earliest moment at which it presents itself to our view, is thus complicated, and as its conceptions, even in the simplest races, are already spiritualized, it is in vain to suppose that the whole system can be formulated in a small number of propositions, or summed up in a single conclusion.

But it is far from our purpose to quarrel with Mr. Frazer; we are rather grateful to him for the exhibition of materials so rich, and for the literary skill with which he has made accessible observations so important to the central ideas of our modern thought. If the pendulum of speculation in regard to mythology swings from side to side, it also beats out the progres-

sion of time ; a solid basis remains established ; and the interesting book before us shows how human is that basis, and how all periods, beliefs, and doctrines are connected in folk-lore. *W. W. N.*

THE TESTIMONY OF TRADITION. By DAVID MACRITCHIE. Author of "Ancient and Modern Britons." With twenty illustrations. London : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. 1890. 8vo, pp. ix., 205.

This book should be of exceptional interest to every folk-lorist, both on account of its subject-matter and also on account of the manner in which it is treated. The intent of the author is to show that the current popular beliefs in dwarfs, especially considered as supernatural manikins, goblins, fairies, and all the smaller tribe of spirits, have been derived in Great Britain or Northern Europe from traditions of aboriginal races of short stature. That such races have existed in many countries, whence they were gradually driven by more powerful and taller invaders, is generally known and admitted. Mr. MacRitchie has rendered special service by collecting with great care from many sources, and setting forth in commendably clear English, the facts or illustrations which refer to it. What is more peculiarly his own discovery, or, as certain cavillers might say, "theory," is that the Picts were identical with the Pechts or Pechs, still remembered in Scotland as "unce wee bodies," and that these were of a kind with the Finns or Feens of Scotch, Irish, and Shetland traditions, while more remote, but in certain aspects of the family, are the Laplanders and similar races. The extent to which the latter are ethnologically allied with the former will in all probability remain for a long time a problem ; that they were confused with them in popular traditions admits of no doubt. That the Pechts lived in hills, or in stone dwellings of beehive form, over which earth was piled, and that the fairies were called "hill-folk," with many other facts of the kind, is certain. These facts Mr. MacRitchie has set forth in a most interesting manner. No future writer on the subject can fail to avail himself of his researches and comments.

The chief part of the book appeared in the "Archæological Review," August and October, 1889, and January, 1890 ; and more than one writer has expressed decided dissent from the author's theory. This brings us to the question, whether the theory or hypothesis accord by which a collection is formed or around which it is gathered, invariably determines the value of the work. There have been in the course of the last few years, especially in the department of folk-lore, instances in which the labor of years, guided by genius, carried out in suffering, privation, and at ruinous expense, has been calmly pooh-poohed and set aside by some closet critic because he dissented from the theory by the aid of which the invaluable facts were gathered and brought together. One man may carry his trout home in a guinea basket and another in an old sixpenny bag ; but what should we think of him who should judge of the value of the fish by the receptacle ? No house can be built without a scaffolding ; it is very much the fashion to forget that it is only a means of building. What the Pechts or Picts were may be determined in due time, but that popular tradition assigns them a